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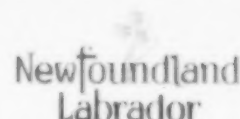
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Tourism, Culture and Recreation
September 29, 2008

Provincial/Territorial Ministers Urge Federal Government to Reverse Decision on Cuts to Arts Programming

Provincial and territorial ministers responsible for culture and heritage who gathered September 25-26 in Québec City, have called upon the Federal Government to reverse its decision to reduce investment in important arts and cultural programs.

A resolution passed at the meeting urged the Federal Government to "note our common concerns; work with provinces and territories on solutions to support cultural development in Canada; and, to convene a special federal-provincial-territorial meeting as soon as possible after the federal election to discuss this issue."

The Honourable Clyde Jackman, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, said it is no secret that recent decisions to cut arts and cultural programming – particularly in the cultural export sector – have serious implications for Newfoundland and Labrador artists. The cuts announced to date are estimated to take \$250,000 out of the pockets of local artists and arts organizations – an amount the Provincial Government has committed to replacing.

"These federal cuts are incredibly short-sighted, and the flippant comments, and insulting remarks made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his staff over the past few weeks have certainly raised the ire of the cultural community – not just in Newfoundland and Labrador, but around the country," said Minister Jackman. "My colleagues in Québec City noted these decisions have compromised the work of artists and organizations to develop and promote our cultural sector – and run counter to provincial/territorial efforts to increase investment to allow artists to leverage funding from the very programs that have been axed.

"These cuts to federal programs – and this negative attitude towards the value of our cultural industries – simply cannot go unchallenged," the minister added.

Minister Jackman said that while funding cuts to the arts and culture sector dominated discussions in Québec City, provincial and territorial ministers also passed a resolution to encourage continued federal-provincial-territorial and municipal support for the national Historic Places Initiative (HPI), which is committed to the protection, conservation, promotion and awareness of Canada's heritage resources.

"The Federal Government is planning to phase out this important initiative that has enjoyed great success in preserving and promoting the built heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador," said Minister Jackman. "We cannot allow the work accomplished to date, and the continued momentum in this sector, to be threatened."

Other topics of discussion during the meeting included encouraging more youth engagement through the arts, culture and heritage, and the impact of new technologies on cultural policies.

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